

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-14 CANCELLED.

Cancel claims 1-14 without prejudice and replace them with new claims 15-35 as follows:

15. (New) A fluid filter used with an associated apparatus having a companion mounting flange, comprising:

a filter socket having a mounting flange that can, in a sealing manner, be connected to the companion flange on the associated apparatus to form a flange connection,

at least one fluid duct for supplying fluid to be filtered from the apparatus to the fluid filter and one fluid duct for discharging filtered fluid from the filter to the apparatus extending through said flange connection,

a sealing plate arranged to close off at least one section of at least one of said fluid ducts, said sealing plate having at least one through opening that is sealed against the companion flange and being arranged flush with an apparatus-side fluid duct,

a surface area of said sealing plate, as seen on a plane of said flange connection, being smaller than a surface area of said mounting flange, and

said sealing plate being inserted in said filter socket in a sealing manner and forming a part of said filter socket.

16. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 15, wherein said fluid filter comprises an oil or fuel filter for an internal combustion engine.

17. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 15, wherein at least two separate sealing plates are provided, one sealing plate being allocated to each of said at least two fluid ducts extending through said flange connection.

18. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 15, wherein, as a third fluid duct, an unpressurized drain duct arranged to drain the fluid filter upon replacement of a filter element of the filter extends through said flange connection.

19. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 18, wherein at least three separate sealing plates are provided, one sealing plate being allocated to each of said at least three fluid ducts extending through said flange connection.

20. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 15, wherein said filter socket and said sealing plate are formed as plastic parts and said sealing plate is one of welded and glued to said filter socket.

21. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 20, wherein said sealing plate, at its through opening, is provided with a pipe socket having a radially acting sealing ring, wherein said pipe socket projects towards the companion flange and can be inserted in an apparatus-side fluid duct.

22. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 15, wherein said filter socket and said sealing plate are formed as parts made of one of plastic and metal, and a sealing ring is inserted between said filter socket and said sealing plate.

23. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 22, wherein said sealing ring acts radially.

24. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 23, wherein said radially acting sealing rings are standard O-rings.

25. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 22, wherein said sealing ring acts axially.

26. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 22, wherein said sealing plate, at its through opening, is provided with an axially acting sealing ring surrounding said through opening and projecting in a direction of the companion flange.

27. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 15, wherein a peripheral axially acting seal is provided in parallel to an outer contour of said mounting flange and arranged therein, said seal enclosing said through opening.

28. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 27, wherein said seal simultaneously seals the fluid duct in the flange connection that is not extending through said through opening in said sealing plate.

29. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 27, wherein the fluid duct not extending through said through opening in said sealing plate is separately sealed by its own sealing means and said seal encloses the fluid duct in said flange connection not extending through said through opening in said sealing plate.

30. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 26, wherein said axially acting seal is a sectional seal.

31. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 20, wherein said plastic is polyamide and said filter socket and said sealing plate are produced as injection-molded parts.

32. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 22, wherein said metal is one of aluminum and magnesium and said filter socket and said sealing plate are produced as die casting parts.

33. (New) An oil or fuel filter for an internal combustion engine, wherein the engine has a companion mounting flange, said filter comprising:

a filter socket with a mounting flange that can, in a sealing manner, be connected to the companion flange to form a flange connection,

at least one fluid duct for supplying fluid to be filtered from the engine to the fluid filter, one fluid duct for discharging filtered fluid from the filter to the engine, and a third fluid duct, being an unpressurized drain duct for draining the fluid filter upon replacement of a filter element, extending through said flange connection,

a sealing plate arranged to close off at least one section of at least one of said fluid ducts, said sealing plate having at least one through opening that is sealed against the companion flange and being arranged flush with an engine-side fluid duct,

a surface area of said sealing plate, as seen on a plane of said flange connection, being smaller than a surface area of said mounting flange, and

said sealing plate being inserted in said filter socket in a sealing manner and forming a part of said filter socket.

34. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 33, wherein three separate sealing plates are provided, wherein one sealing plate being allocated to said at least three fluid ducts extending through said flange connection.

35. (New) A fluid filter according to claim 34, wherein said filter socket and said sealing plate are parts made of plastic or of metal and said sealing plates are inserted into said filter socket and fixed therein, with one of a peripheral, radially and axially acting sealing ring being placed intermediate the filter socket and each of said sealing plates.